



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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Editor, Foreign Policy  
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Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir:

Normally, CIA does not respond to articles written about it. However, because Allan Goodman's article "Dateline Langley: Fixing the Intelligence Mess" in the winter issue concerns an area of the Agency's activities where we can speak publicly and because the article is so inaccurate, we believe the record should be corrected.

Mr. Goodman left the Agency in 1980, and his information concerning it is seriously outdated. A point-by-point rebuttal of all of Mr. Goodman's errors and recommendations would take too much time and space. Thus, I will only address the most egregious of his inaccuracies:

- Mr. Goodman states that the Intelligence Community does not study its failures and that in the few instances where post-mortems have been undertaken the results are not widely disseminated or discussed.  
Fact: In recent years, the Director has assigned a senior group of distinguished officials the task of evaluating not only some fifteen major historical intelligence problems but also has commissioned them to evaluate retrospectively at one and two year intervals virtually every estimate now prepared. Moreover, the Directorate of Intelligence now has its own evaluation staff whose principal function is to do retrospective evaluations of CIA's assessments on particular subjects. Moreover, these evaluations are widely shared with the concerned organizations. Finally, in this connection, one of the Agency's most popular training courses now is a course on intelligence successes and failures.
- Mr. Goodman asserts that analysts learn to be wary of doing longer range or in-depth studies and that the task of writing estimates and think pieces is to be avoided. He notes that most of these studies are turned out by members of a special staff and that promotions